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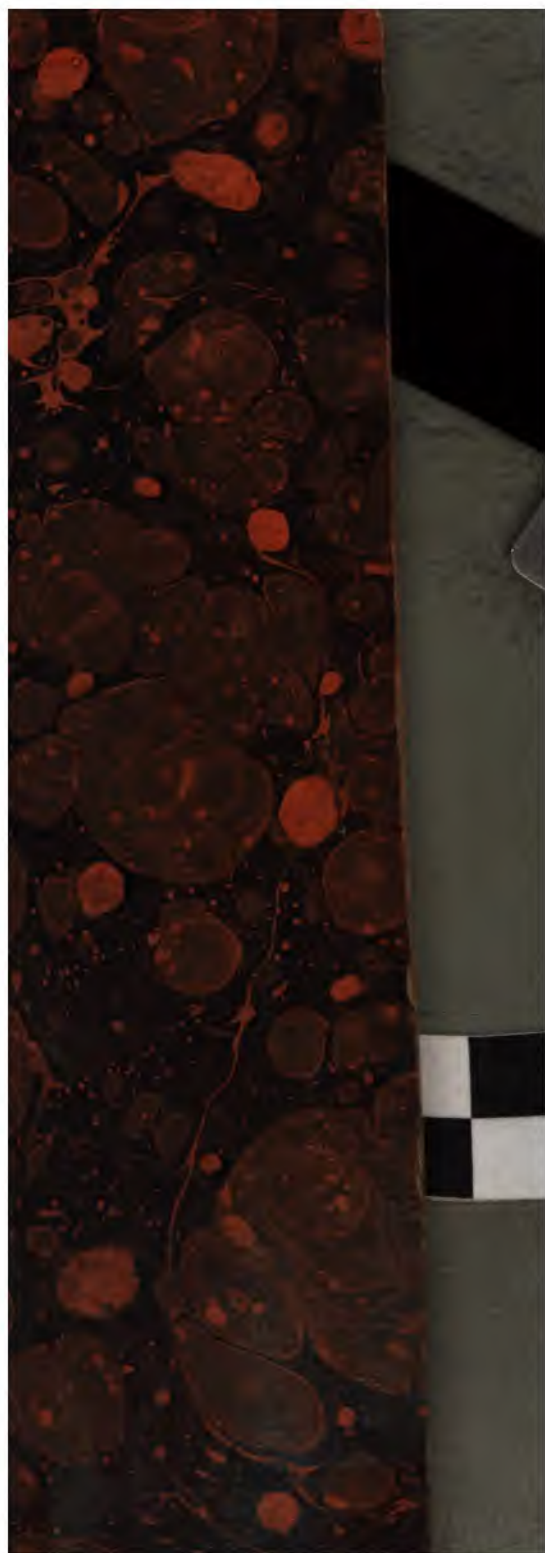
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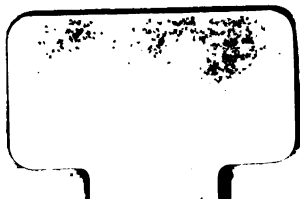
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1. a. 115.





40 *B.M. Bond.*

THE
FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH

ASSAILED IN OXFORD:

A
LETTER



TO HIS GRACE THE

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

&c. &c. &c.

VISITOR OF THE UNIVERSITY,

WITH

PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE CHANGES IN ITS CONSTITUTION,

NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION.

J. F. Willeford

BY A

CLERICAL MEMBER OF CONVOCATION. *12*

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A

LETTER,

&c.

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP :

It may seem, I fear, somewhat presumptuous in one who, though he dearly prizes his connection with the University of Oxford, has no part in its government, and whose lot is cast at a distance from it, to call your Grace's attention to the existing condition of its affairs. Yet the novel circumstances in which we are placed seem to require extraordinary measures. In common times, the non-resident members of the University gladly leave the active management of affairs to those who bear offices within her walls — and they judge wisely. In Oxford are many men who, to capacious and well-stored minds, add that practical acquaintance with the details of University administration, which alone can enable them to conduct them with quiet and unobtrusive uniformity ; and, under their management, it has long experienced that tranquillity which, proverbially, leaves nothing to record, each succeeding year being marked rather by the gradual succession of individuals than by any change of principles.

Under these circumstances, the non-resident members have very properly abstained from exercising the powers vested in them by the statutes. Yet from the fact that those powers are entrusted to them, we may conclude, that, under certain circumstances, they were intended to be exercised. This conjuncture seems to me to have arrived.

When a number of trustees are associated in any office, it is commonly arranged, almost indeed of necessity, that the active management of affairs should be left in the hands of a few, whose fitness, whether by character or circumstances, commands the confidence of their colleagues. But, as each is ultimately responsible for the acts of the body, it becomes imperative upon each to resume the authority which he has delegated, if those to whom the administration has been left, should at any time be found to propose as the object of their trust, results wholly different from those which he feels himself bound to pursue; or even, if professing to keep in view the same end, they adopt means which he considers in no way to tend towards its accomplishment. And should any such fundamental difference exist, the very integrity and trust-worthy rectitude of his colleagues, renders his interference doubly necessary; by ensuring to him that their professed principles will really be the rule of their conduct.

Now such is the relation borne to the University by every non-resident member. We are one and all *Trustees*; — trustees charged with the well-being of the University, bound, as far as in us lies, to hand it

to our children as illustrious as we received it from our fathers. It is not our duty, indeed, to interfere in the detail of daily matters — to show an ungenerous want of confidence in those to whom the helm is, at each successive period, committed ; but yet we are bound to see that their desired haven be the same to which our eyes are directed, and that they hold the same fundamental principles with ourselves as to the course by which it is to be attained.

What great objects, then, was the University designed to effect ? What is its part and office among the institutions of our church and nation ? Is it not, to be the nursery of the Church of England, whence a succession of men may constantly issue, who with minds well stored with the wisdom of former times, and with characters moulded after the pattern of those worthies, whose histories and whose works have been their study and delight, may go forth into the world each to fill some important sphere of action, and to diffuse into the surrounding mass, less favoured than himself with the blessings of education, a sincere admiration for the achievements of former times, an earnest attachment to the principles whence they sprung, and a resolute purpose of adhering to them at whatever hazards ? Such men, whether among the Clergy or the Laity, are indeed the salt of the earth—whether like the Evelyns and Nelsons of former days, they carry into the secular world the atmosphere of the sanctuary, or whether they devote themselves to her immediate service, and each in his own neighbourhood present to the eyes of men (always most

readily affected by what they see) an example of the Apostolical ministry, and a type of the Church herself—or whether, remaining within the limits of the University, they devote themselves, without distinction, to the pursuit of truth, and prepare themselves, by prayer and meditation, by patient study and teachable humility, to wield the arms of Hooker against every assailant—or whether, lastly, they consecrate their powers to the service of the succeeding generation, by raising up others to tread in the same steps. For, be it ever remembered, that the benefactors of the human race form (for the most part) one connected series; in which each succeeding generation is joined to the last, not by ordinary laws of descent, but by that transforming process of education, which like a moral engrafting, derives to the disciple the sap and fruitfulness of his Master.

And how is this to be effected? How is the University thus to secure these blessings to the Church and nation? Is it not by training up her members, from the first, in pure and uncalculating loyalty to the Church—by accustoming them, even before they can formally defend their conclusions, to regard her as the sacred ark wherein the truth has been preserved to us, and by leading them on, step by step, not as sceptical disputants, who would investigate for themselves a new road to the shrine of truth; but as humble and teachable disciples, labouring to ascertain what has been the Church's faith and practice, assured that the path by which fathers, and confessors, and martyrs, attained the high prize, will more certainly conduct

them to it, than any which their own acuteness and the modern development of intellect can enable them to discover ?

Such are the objects to which we would see the University devoted ; and however we must admit, that the practical workings of her system have occasionally been impaired, by negligence or incompetency on the part of some of those to whom its execution has been committed ; yet it is undeniable that on these principles it has been conducted. This has been witnessed even by the malignity of her enemies, which has been excited by her steadiness. For by this alone she has provoked the attacks (so many and so ferocious) of those who glory in representing the spirit of the age—the characteristic temper whereby this æra is distinguished from those which preceded it. These principles explain her preference of those studies by which the moral character is disciplined, over those which merely devolve the intellectual powers—her steady refusal to give any prominent place in her course of education to those elegant and scientific pursuits, which in our day (for the first time perhaps since the age of Socrates), have usurped almost exclusive possession of the title of philosophy, and which have an adventitious value in the eyes of the learner apart from their intrinsic attraction, by affording, beyond all other studies, the means of immediate display. Lastly, they are stamped upon the tone and character of her theology, which has been directed rather to the defence of ancient truths than to any new discoveries.

While then our academical system has been administered on these principles, the non-resident members of the University have confidently and wisely abstained from interfering in the management of affairs. But for some years past there has been spreading among us a misgiving, that the spirit of innovation was gaining ground in Oxford itself; and that a party, efficient alike by the talents of some of its leaders, and by the nature of a system, calculated to dazzle the minds of the younger students, threatened, more than any external attacks, to impair the usefulness of the University. / We have seen one who has filled stations of high influence in the University, publicly affixing his name to a work which introduced in a cheap form to the English reader, those Neologian principles of interpretation by which many German writers have virtually undermined the authority of the Old Testament. Other publications have appeared, which though recommended by the great powers and high station of their authors, have appeared to us in no way calculated to serve the cause of truth, and maintain the standard of orthodox doctrine. Our apprehensions too have been increased by the public conduct of some who, from important stations in Oxford, have been exalted to others, which have brought them more fully before the world. And, lastly, reports have reached us that these are not isolated and accidental occurrences; but that among a party in the University, there exists an unequivocal disposition to modify our system by a series of liberal changes, tending to make knowledge, rather than moral discipline,

the object of our studies, and to cultivate rather the habit of bold and irreverent inquiry, often conducted in the most flippant tone and spirit, and sparing no subject, whether human or divine, for that humility and self-distrust which characterizes the true philosopher, whatever be his subject, and which is, above all things, indispensable to the beneficial pursuit of religious truth.

It is unnecessary, my Lord, that I should point out at any length, how fatally such a change in our system would affect the university, the Church, and the nation. Can we stand neutral when it is questioned, whether the system to which we owe our Hookers, our Bulls, and our Kenns, shall be changed for one which will supply us, possibly, with men devoted to the interests of science, able and willing patrons of commerce, and eager in the augmentation of national and individual wealth ; but who, meanwhile, have never been accustomed to revere and pursue TRUTH—hardly to believe, that in religious and moral subjects there is anything decidedly and intrinsically true ; and who pride themselves on substituting an extended liberalism, for the high and chivalrous loyalty with which the Church, her doctrines and institutions, were formerly regarded ; adhering to her only as that, among many contending sects, which they happen to prefer ; and representing the belief or rejection of the Christian verities as a mere matter of opinion, unconnected with moral and religious character ? Alas ! how ill should we discharge the duty we owe to our country, for whose

benefit we are trustees ; how unworthily of our fathers, from whom we have received our institutions ; how improvidently towards our children, to whom we are bound to transmit them ! How different would be the influence of Oxford on the country at large ; and how little would the scientific and liberal man, active in all works of public utility, and priding himself on the preference which he gives them over objects of a religious nature, supply the place of a faithful son of the Church, shining in his place with a light which honours the principles he boldly professes, and whose name, as far as it is known, cheers the hearts of those, who feel this world to be a scene of weary contest between the principles of good and evil !

It is under this impression that I venture to call your Grace's attention to the change now proposed in the constitution of the university of Oxford. I think it will appear, that this proposal is the first direct attempt of the party to which I have referred, to carry into effect their own views of academical reform. And I have the more explicitly stated the principles on which I conceive this alteration to be advocated, as well as those which bind us to reject it ; because I know that it has actually gained much support, through a misapprehension of the objects to be effected by the change, and of the views of those by whom it is urged.

It is in some quarters confidently asserted, that the object of the proposed alteration in the statutes is only to "remove needless scruples," "to prevent a very serious act from being lightly performed," "to increase

our real security by abandoning a defence which is more useful to an assailant than to ourselves," and the author of a pamphlet¹ lately published at Oxford, passes over, with a sneer, the fears of heresy entertained by the opponents of the measure, as altogether unworthy his serious notice.

I admit, my Lord—nay, I strongly maintain—that among those who advocate this change, there are many who would regard the approach of heresy with the most lively concern. Were there not such men, it would be indeed a futile attempt to propose such a measure to the University of Oxford ; but the danger of such changes is not less because many who press them forward are unconscious of its existence. It is the property of every revolution, to be conducted, not by one party, but by many. In the first stage are required well-meaning men, impressed with an exaggerated sense, perhaps, of existing evils, and who, cherishing dreams of possible perfection, are made the instruments in the hands of those who afterwards push the matter much farther than they wish. Yet even these, in their turn, are displaced, to make room for others, and, like the successive hordes who poured down upon the declining Roman Empire, each destroys that which his predecessors left, until " the land which was as the garden of Eden before them, is as the wilderness behind them."

Should not these considerations, which are suggested by the whole course of history, and particularly

¹ A Letter to Lord Radnor, by a Member of Convocation.

by the religious revolutions of our own country, in the seventeenth century, have taught the author of the pamphlet before-mentioned, to pause before he dismissed with a sneer our fears for the security of the faith? Should he not have remembered, that men like himself, are often the first instruments in a movement of which they are eventually the repentant victims?

We should then have reason, on these accounts, to receive the proposal before us with hesitation, even were it the spontaneous movement of men well affected to the principles of our Church. But what if it should appear, that it was originally proposed by other parties, desired for other objects, and supported by other arguments; and that these men, who form the front row of the assailants, are thus pushed forward, only to cover the advance of a host whose intentions are altogether different? Yes, my Lord, they tell us of declarations¹ exactly equivalent to the existing subscription; but they are but instruments in the hands of those who, on principle, object to *all tests*; who would sweep them entirely away, both from the university and the Church; and who, being accused of holding opinions long ago condemned as heretical, instead of refuting the charge, content themselves with denying altogether the importance of a right faith. With them the proposal originated, and their views alone would ultimately be furthered by its success.

¹ See Letter to Lord Radnor.

These are strong words, but not stronger I conceive than the facts of the case require. Whence came the first proposal for any alteration in the conditions of admission to the University? Notoriously from the political dissenters—from those who, on their own showing, refuse to sign our articles, not so much from any dislike to this or that proposition contained in them, as because they object on principle, to the imposition of any test whatever; and who, acting on this very principle, have entered into the closest union with those heretics who maintain the simple humanity of our Lord. Did the “Member of Convocation” remember this when he treated our fears as visionary?

But it will be said, that the vigorous opposition made to the claims of the Dissenters, supported as they were by a vote of the House of Commons, has, for the present at least, laid to rest this question; that the present measure, which proposes to substitute for subscription a declaration of Churchmanship, is not to be confounded with that demanded by the Dissenters, the rather because it originates in a very different quarter. All this is true—the party by whom the present movement is supported is indeed different—and it differs herein: that it is composed of men among ourselves, who are doubly dangerous, because they add to the very same principles which instigated the former attack, the peculiar advantages which they derive from their situation as members of our own body.

This, my Lord, is no matter of questionable inference, it is a mere statement of the facts of the case.

With whom did the present scheme originate? — With men who unite with us in desiring to maintain the existing standard of doctrine, though they dissent from our notions as to the means of effecting it? Let the facts speak for themselves. The first proposal was made in a pamphlet¹ which appeared towards the end of the last year, a pamphlet too, obviously connected with the present movement, as its author is one of that board, “the heads of houses,” at whose recommendation it is now brought before us. And, as this body, in acting on the plans proposed by one of their own number, only three months ago, have in no way protested against the principles by which he supports them, it cannot, I think, be unreasonable to conclude, that his principles are approved by that party at least among them, who are pressing upon us the adoption of his schemes.

What, then, are these principles? How does Dr. Hampden support the proposed change? Not on grounds of national, political, or academical expediency; nor yet of abstract justice; but by arguments purely theological. He would remove the subscription, because he objects to all tests and creeds as conditions to communion, and sees no valid reason for any separation between ourselves, and those who “unhappily” reject the doctrines of our Lord’s divinity and atonement.

Surely, my Lord, this pamphlet alone, considered in connection with all the circumstances of the case,

¹ “Observations on Religious Dissent,” with particular reference to the use of Religious Tests in the University, by R. D. Hampden, D.D. Principal of St. Mary Hall, and Professor of Moral Philosophy.

sufficiently warrants my assertion, that the foundation of the faith is at present assailed in Oxford. I do not indeed accuse Dr. Hampden or his supporters, of any unequivocal assertion of doctrines directly Socinian ; but if we refer to history we shall find, I fear, that in many respects, he goes far beyond the errors of Socinus and Crellius. These heretics, at least, believed something definite and positive ; but he appears to object to all statements of doctrine of whatever kind, if they claim to be regarded as expressing any thing of intrinsic truth ; and, by representing the points of difference as trifling, he certainly paves the way for others to formal Socinianism, however he may himself escape it.

The main principle of this writer is, that all creeds, whether orthodox or heterodox, are but statements of *human opinion*, containing what he calls "*theories* of the Divine nature and attributes — *theories* of human nature, &c. ;" not at all necessarily connected with the inspired text, nor with the religious character — that a creed is only truth to those who believe it to be true ; that it is imperative, perhaps, on their private consciences to maintain and cherish, but not truth to any one else. That two persons maintaining contradictory creeds may both hold the truth, each in his own way. And again, that revelation has to do only with facts and Providences (which is confessedly the case with natural religion¹), and not with doctrines

¹ He even strangely maintains that the Apostles' Creed confines itself to these historical facts, forgetting apparently the words—"Jesus Christ *HIS only Son*," "the communion of Saints," &c.

as to the Divine nature and attributes. From these principles he naturally concludes that such doctrines as are contained in the creeds, should be regarded, to use his own words, only as "theological opinions" or "pious opinions," or "theories," the adoption or rejection of which can never be a test of the religious character, and, consequently, is wholly unfit to be made a condition of Communion. And, be it observed that Dr. Hampden himself expressly applies this conclusion to what he calls "the extreme case of the Unitarians¹!"

I proceed to corroborate my representation of Dr. Hampden's views, by quotations from his pamphlet.

The first passage selected states in a few words the whole result of his reasoning.

"I do not scruple....to avow myself favourable to a removal of all tests, so far as they are employed as securities of orthodoxy among our members at large. Tests are no part of religious education; if they were I should think we were justified in retaining them. They are merely boundaries of exclusion."—(Page 35).

Again,

"Let members of our Church search and see whether their sincere zeal for the religion of Christ may not have been, unconsciously to themselves, transferred to the defence of human expositions of doctrine. But this question resolves itself into a still higher one:—whether our Articles in the present state of theological opinion ought to remain exactly what they are; or whether improvements might not be made in them, com-

¹ See Observations, &c. p. 19. It is plain from the line of the argument, that by Unitarians in this passage Dr. Hampden describes the Socinians.

mensurate with the advances made in other scientific methods, and calculated to embrace a wider extent of Christian profession, without any sacrifice of real Christian truth,—in furtherance indeed of the views of the reformers themselves. But this is not a question so much for the University to consider, as for the Governors of the Church and its members at large. Perhaps the crisis is now arrived, at which such an inquiry is not only a Christian duty; but is also necessary for the peace and temporal security of the Church.”—(p. 42.)

Now to go more into the detail of his views—

“If it should appear that men in reality differ less in religious belief and conduct than their formularies of doctrine would lead us to suppose; that it is chiefly the introduction of human opinion into the matter of revelation that occasions a difference of professions, then is there great cause of alienation and asperity removed; and we may come to the discussion of questions connected with dissent, with the indulgence due to erring judgments. *For if all opinion, as such, is involuntary in its nature*, it is only a fallacy, to invest dissent in religion with the awe of the objects about which it is conversant¹.”—(p. 5.)

Again,

“The real causes of separation are to be found, in that confusion of theological and moral truth with religion which is

¹ Compare with this passage the following, from Lord Brougham’s *Inaugural Discourse*, at Glasgow, which is here printed as it appears in the original Pamphlet. “As men will no longer suffer themselves to be led blindfold in ignorance, so will they no more yield to the vile principle of judging and treating their fellow-creatures, not according to the intrinsic merit of their actions, but according to the accidental and involuntary coincidence of their opinions. The Great Truth has finally gone forth to all the ends of the earth, THAT MAN SHALL NO MORE RENDER ACCOUNT TO MAN FOR HIS BELIEF, OVER WHICH HE HAS HIMSELF NO CONTROL. Henceforward, nothing shall prevail upon us to praise or to blame any one for that which he can no more change than he can the hue of his skin, or the height of his stature.”—(p. 47.)

evidenced in the profession of different sects. Opinions on religious matters are regarded as identical with the objects of faith, and the zeal which belongs to dissentients in the latter, is transferred to the guiltless differences of fallible judgments. Whilst we agree in the canon of Scripture—in the very words for the most part from which we learn what are the objects of faith, we suffer disunion to spread among us through the various interpretations suggested by our own reasonings on the admitted facts of Scripture. We introduce theories of the Divine Being and attributes—theories of human nature and of the universe—principles drawn from the various branches of human philosophy—into the body itself of revealed wisdom. And we then proceed to contend for these unrevealed representations of the wisdom of God as if it were that very wisdom as it stands forth confessed in his own living oracles. The wisdom that is from above is at once pure and gentle. Surely it has no resemblance to that dogmatical and sententious wisdom which theological controversy has created.” —(p. 7.)

Farther on, the difference between religion and theological opinions is stated and illustrated.

“Religion consists of those truths which are simply contained in divine Revelation, with the affections, dispositions, and actions suggested by them. Theological opinion is the various result of the necessary action of our minds on the truths made known to us by the divine word. I say *necessary* action of our minds, because, as I have already observed, it seems *practically* impossible to check the tendency of the mind to speculate on such subjects, however *theoretically* unsound such speculation must be. But the distinction has been lost sight of in practice. In religion, properly so called, few Christians, if any (I speak, of course, of pious minds), really differ. All acknowledge, with nearly unanimous assent, I believe, the great original facts of the Bible. They may not be conscious,

perhaps, that they do so far agree: and the reason of this is clear; namely, that they judge of their religion from their theological opinions, and reflect back on the one simple, invariable truth of God, the various lights of some speculative system of doctrines, the mere conclusions of their own reason. I would take the extreme case of the Unitarians, and I would say to them: why do you take so much pains to convince the world, that you do not agree with the mass of professing Christians, in believing, in the same sense, ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all?’ Is it not, that you identify your religion with your dogmas—that you transfer the natural partiality of your own minds for certain principles, to the broad outlines of Scripture truth, and dissent from your brethren in the faith because they will not assent to your metaphysical conclusions? For when I look at the reception by the Unitarians, both of the Old and New Testaments, I cannot for my part, strongly as I dislike their Theology, deny to those who acknowledge this basis of divine facts, the name of Christians. Who, indeed, is justified in denying the title to any one who professes to love Christ in sincerity? much more must we deny it to those who, confessing him in word, deny him in works. I do not forget, that passages of Scripture have been retrenched or explained away by Unitarians. But is not this very proceeding an illustration of the mode of interpreting religion by speculative dogmas and conclusions? Not only is the religious fact, but the books themselves which are the vehicle of it, made to bend, and take a colouring from theological opinion. I allude to the case of the Unitarian more particularly, because, in the ordinary view, he is regarded as more liberal—as less exclusive—in his creed, than members of other Christian communions. And I wish it to be considered, whether he is not, on the other hand, as dogmatic as any other religionist; perhaps the most so of all, so far as he insists, beyond all others, on applying a positive sense to passages and expressions which revelation leaves in the

darkness of the clouds surrounding the Divine Presence. Putting him, however, on the same footing precisely, of earnest religious zeal and love for the Lord Jesus Christ, on which I should place any other Christian, I propose to him impartially to weigh with himself, whether it is not theological dogmatism, and not religious belief, properly so called, which constitutes the principle of his dissent.

“ But I am not intending to condemn him more than other Christians, on this ground: I select his case, by way of illustration, as an extreme one. The principle itself is the common fault of us all; in all communions it works its mischief. And without accusing individuals, I propose only to accuse the principle itself—the confusion of theological conclusions and opinions with religion—with a view to its correction by us all. Practically, indeed, the dogmatism of one party may be simply attributable to the dogmatism of another. The positive language of the Athanasian might as naturally occasion that of the Arian, as the positive language of the Arian might occasion that of the Athanasian.”—(p. 18.)

In page 22, we have Dr. Hampden’s view of the bad effects of creeds, in checking theological discoveries.

“ Were it not for the intrinsic sublimity of the subject, the case of adherence to such unvarying formularies, would forcibly strike the minds of men as no less incongruous and injurious in religion, than in medicine would be the case of a society of Physicians, who should make the maxims of Hippocrates and Galen the unalterable basis of their profession. Surely our reformers had no such view in drawing up our Articles. They did what they could in those times, as prudent men.”

In the same page Dr. Hampden tells us the reasons of his attachment to the Church of England —

“ I love and admire the Church of England because I con-

ceive it to be constituted on the right basis of religious communion; neither dogmatic in its spirit, though the wording of its formularies may often carry the sound of dogmatism, but in reality labouring throughout in its vocation as a faithful keeper of the word of God !”

Our author’s expansive liberality is further shown in page 25.

“By virtue of those very theological opinions to which I have declared my assent, in admitting the Articles of the Church of England, I have signified my denial and exclusion of opinions which I think injurious to Christian truth, and derogatory to the character of a true Church of Christ. But because I am exclusively attached to the Church of England, I must not lay down an abstract principle, denying the right of others to regard each his own communion, in the same light. So far, therefore, let each claim the benefit of the observations here made. But it is their immediate application to ourselves that is the matter in hand — to each communion for the regulation of itself. If they tend to abate speculation and dogmatism in religion; if they make a way for improvement in the systematic statement of doctrines; if they foster feelings of candour, forbearance, and charity, their alleged latitudinarianism is, at least, not without excuse — as neither is it, I contend, without its reason.”

Again, p. 26.

“Other communions are not necessarily in error or heresy because we hold them so; but, viewing their opinions as erroneous, we must guard against them, as feeling that we should ourselves be heretical and profane if we should change and adopt such opinions. For example, as believers in a real atonement for sin, we may justly feel shocked at the thought which imputes any merit to man, and regard as a sinful pride in ourselves, the absence of that self-abasement in the sight

of God which is peculiarly impressed on us by this holy truth. But we must not conclude of another, who shuts out of his creed this cardinal doctrine, that he must *therefore*¹ be proud and self-righteous. For, with all his heterodoxy of language, he *may* be more humble in spirit than many who are more dogmatically correct in their enumeration of the doctrine. Thus, again, to a Trinitarian, the consequences of rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity must consistently be regarded as dangerous. But he has no right to extend his anathema beyond himself to one who has, unhappily, not embraced the same view of Scripture truth."

A strange confusion of ideas seems to pervade this passage, the argument comes to this point: Dr. Hampden and another man, at present unite in holding, with equal firmness, the doctrine of the Atonement. Each of them, it seems, is bound to believe that the other would commit no breach of moral or religious duty, should he "change and adopt" contrary opinions; but he is equally bound to believe that he, himself, would be "heretical and profane," should he undergo identically the same change of opinion, and with precisely the same degree of sincerity!

But to return to Dr. Hampden's words —

"To expect," he says, page 29, "that all sects should formally and ostensibly pull down their barriers of separation and combine in one common mass, under the Christian name, seems hopeless, if we are to judge from what is known of human nature. But may not that gentle and enlightened and spiritual toleration of Dissenting opinions, which consists not of a mere allowance of profession (the bare due of every one at our hands), but of a charitable, religious judgment,

¹ This word Dr. H. prints in italics.

that thinks no evil, that is willing to bid God speed¹, to every one that names the name of Christ in sincerity, may not, I say, such a toleration as this, insensibly work a blessed change in the minds and hearts of those who are now estranged from us? Look to the wisdom of Rome, which combined, in one mass, the natives of so many different countries and discordant tongues, under the one name of Roman citizens; and let us do that out of charity which Rome did out of policy."

Such are the principles on which the University of Oxford is required to act, in substituting a Declaration for the Subscription which she has hitherto demanded of those who are admitted to her lists. These passages, be it remembered, are all extracted from one pamphlet of 42 pages, which is (it may fairly be said) the manifesto of the party by whom this proposal is introduced—a circumstance which, if it stood alone, would compel us to attach to it a degree of importance which it would not merit if regarded merely as representing the sentiments of its author. But when I stated above, that there is a *party* in the university, engaged in the attempt to liberalize its system, I did not merely rest my assertion on these grounds. I will proceed to submit to your Grace some passages selected from the writings of one or two other authors, premising only, that all are members of the University, all professed theologians, all united with

¹ Compare John ii. ver. 10. "If any man come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." How lamentably Dr. Hampden must consider the writer of this verse to have fallen into the common error of a dogmatical attachment to his own theological opinions!

each other, and known to be united, not merely by general agreement in opinions, but by personal intimacy, and (I may say) mutual understanding.

Having observed thus much, I shall extract some passages from a work¹ lately published, with his name, by one of the party to which I allude. There is, he says—

“ A very useful distinction, which is rather neglected by logicians among us. The distinction to which I allude is that of objective and subjective truth. That the world, both visible and invisible, is what it is, independent of our conceptions, requires no proof. This is a collective instance of objective truth. In things which affect our senses, this kind of truth is searched, and frequently ascertained by experiment. But in things to which the senses cannot reach, the only truth which exists for man is subjective. Concerning those subjects, that is truth for us which each of us is persuaded to be true. Subjective truth is our own conviction. To use a familiar example: the moon is either inhabited or uninhabited. One of these two propositions represents an objective truth. But as long as men cannot take an ethereal journey to our satellite, the strongest conviction, on either side of the question, must be only subjective truth, *i. e.* truth for the person who has the conviction. As we cannot approach the objective truth of such convictions, beyond or out of our intellect, all our moral duties to truth (where moral duties are concerned, as is the case with religious truths) are due to the only truth we can reach, *i. e.* the conviction of our own minds. But it is here that the fatal mistake takes place. The pride of the religious enthusiast takes up his subjective truth as the divine objective truth itself. On other subjects, if contradiction made him angry or impatient, he would be more or less ashamed of show-

¹ The Law of Anti-Religious Libel Reconsidered, &c. by the Rev. J. B. White, of Oriel College.

ing it. Not so in the present case. He indulges his most violent passions under the character of zeal for God and his truth; his natural desire of ruling over others appears in the shape of a vehement concern in the preservation of the assent of the mass of the people to the orthodox, *i. e.* his own opinions. Because he is sure he is right, he positively denies that those who contradict can be sure they are right. * * * * Do I mean to assert, that all convictions upon religious subjects are equally right? such a supposition would be uncandid. What I assert is, that whatever moral duties man owes to truth, he owes to that subjective truth which, after proper examination, he has found. Veracity demands his avowal of it. His denial of it is a criminal falsehood. No conviction of another man can discharge him from this individual duty. As to whether any one has done every thing in his power to come to the right conclusion, such a judgment is reserved for Him who alone can read the heart. Our Creator has placed in every breast a power, which, as it exists in all men, without any mark of respective superiority or inferiority, cannot be amenable to any other tribunal but that of the Giver of it. Conscience is supreme in every man in regard to himself. To question, however, a similar supremacy in the conscience of another man, to oppose and disturb it when it does not invade the rights of another conscience, is an outrage upon the most sacred privilege of our nature¹.—(p. 33.)

I might easily find other passages of the same import, but at present I will pass on, to exhibit the

¹ The reader will observe, that the principles asserted in this passage necessarily condemn the use of *all* creeds, as terms of communion; and that the writer is misled by having overlooked the fact, that the doctrines which they contain—the Divinity and Atonement of our Lord, for instance—have come to us, *in form*, and *as* doctrines, on the authority of the Apostles, and, therefore, are no less certainly the objective truth (to use his own language) in matters of religion, than are the facts which experiment attests in scientific subjects.

views taken by another writer, one of the most influential, by his talents and situation, among the party in question, and whose opinions might naturally carry weight in the present case, as he is himself engaged in the education of youth. It is therefore important to observe, that he is not actuated merely by an opinion, that subscription should not be demanded at entrance to the University, but by a conviction, that no man should be excluded even from the closest religious communion by his rejection of the most fundamental verities of the faith.

“ I think what Bacon found wanting in his time is wanting still, namely, ‘ A declaration of the nature and magnitude of those points which utterly divide men from the Church, and expel them from the communion of the faithful.’ ‘ And if any man think this has been done long since,’ either in the decrees of the first four councils, or in any creeds or articles of any existing Church, ‘ let him observe again and again,’ as Bacon most justly adds, ‘ how much truth, and how much moderation, have been shown in the doing of it.’ For instance, a false criterion of ‘ fundamental errors’ has been set up, in measuring the importance of the error to us, by the excellence of the subject to which it relates. This has caused men to lay so much stress on all opinions that relate to God. And, indeed, opinions of His *moral* attributes are of the last importance, because such as we suppose Him to be morally, such we strive to become ourselves; but opinions as to His nature *metaphysically* may be wholly unimportant, because they are often of such a kind as to be wholly inoperative upon our spiritual state; they neither advance us in goodness, nor obstruct our progress in it.

“ On the other hand, that is to us a fundamental error, which directly interferes with our own edification. That is to

say, we cannot worship with a man who insists upon our omitting some religious exercise, which we feel to be important to our own improvement. I laid the stress, therefore, on the worship of Christ, not on the admission of His proper divinity. If a man will not let me pray to and praise my Saviour, he destroys the exercise of my faith altogether; but I am in no way injured by his praying to Him as a glorified Man, while I pray to Him as God¹."

The following passage from the same writer shows the relative importance which he assigns to the cultivation of the intellect, and to the acquirement of sound doctrinal views.

"I would have him (the theological student) never lay aside the greatest works of human genius, of whatever age or country; they are not so numerous as to overwhelm him, and whatever be his particular studies, some of these, whether philosophers, poets, or historians, should be always on his table, and daily in his hand, till his mind, catching a portion of their excellence, is able to work with tenfold power upon whatever subjects he may submit to it. And if, for these great instructors, he be content to leave unopened many of the volumes which are now thought so essential to theological learning, let him not be afraid of the results of his exchange. Always supposing, as the foundation, a constant, critical, and devout study of the Scriptures themselves, and the use of those philological and antiquarian works which are essential, and *alone essential*, to the understanding of them; he will find, that in the comparison of human works, both spiritually and intellectually, the works of the greatest minds will be most useful to him; that he may be well content to be ignorant even of Bull and Pearson, if he is thus enabled to become more intimately familiar with Bacon and Aristotle²."

¹ Postscript to the Principles of Church Reform, by T. Arnold, D.D. &c. p. 9.

² Dr. Arnold, Sermons, vol. iii. p. xxii. xxiii.

Be it remembered, that Pearson's work is the standard exposition of the Apostles' Creed, Bull's of the Nicene ; and these are the subjects which Dr. Arnold would have the theological student content to neglect, that he may more carefully devote himself to Bacon and Aristotle.

These passages, My Lord, unless I have altogether misapprehended their meaning, fully warrant my fears for the faith itself, in consequence of the present movement in Oxford. They prove, I conceive, that the parties by whom it is urged avow their opinion, that matters of faith are in real truth wholly indifferent. This alone is sufficiently alarming, but Dr. Hampden, in order that full development may not be wanting to his views, has referred from his pamphlet¹ to the Bampton Lectures preached by him three years back. Let us follow his appeal, and see whether his principles appear less dangerous as they are better understood.

First, let us hear his opinion of the Apostolical Fathers ; of Clement, the fellow labourer of St. Paul, of Ignatius and Polycarp, of whom we know, not only that they were the disciples and familiar friends of the Apostles Peter and John, but so far profited by their instructions, as to be appointed by them to be their successors in the teaching and administration of the Church.

"To come," he says, "to the period of the Apostolic Fathers. Whatever praise we may assign to them for their ardour and firmness as believers, can we justly ascribe to them the merit of accurate expositors of Christian truth? Impar-

¹ Page 13.

tiality, I think, requires us to say otherwise. Were we to endeavour, indeed, to form a system of divinity out of these writers, it would be found necessary to explain away many of their positions and expressions, in order to bring them into accordance with the admitted truths of Scripture. As evidences of the essence and spirit of the Gospel, as it was handed down from the outset, they are invaluable; as testimonies of the earnestness of individuals,—of their Christian character and Christian hopes,—the writings are also highly interesting and important; but as authorities decisive of what is *true* or what is *false* in theological statement, they are in reality less valuable than the writings of a subsequent age¹.”

Is it not an awful symptom as to the tendency of any system, when its advocates are thus compelled to abandon the doctrinal statements of those who were appointed by the inspired Apostles themselves as *teachers* of the Churches?

Accordingly, we find this same author thus estimating the value and authority of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, which he plainly asserts to be in no way binding on us.

“ This is the view which I take, not only of our articles at large, but in particular of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, as they stand in our ritual, or are adopted into our articles. If it be admitted that the notions on which their several expressions are founded are both unphilosophical and unscriptural; it must be remembered, that they do not impress those notions on the faith of the Christian, as matters of affirmative belief. They only use the terms of ancient theories of philosophy,—theories current in the schools at the time when they were written,—to exclude others *more obviously* injurious to the

¹ Bampton Lectures for 1832, p. 358, 359.

simplicity of the faith. The speculative language of these creeds, it should be observed, was admitted into the Church of England as established by the Reformers, before the period when the genius of Bacon exposed the emptiness of the system, which the Schools had palmed upon the world as the only instrument for the discovery of all truth¹."

In the same work we find what may be called an amended confession of faith, separating the facts which Scripture records from the "infinite theories," which may be raised upon them, and leaving to be classed under the latter head the Divinity and Atonement of our Lord, and in fact every doctrine which makes a Christian feel that life itself were dearly saved by the sacrifice of his faith.

"There can be no rational doubt, that man is in a degraded, disadvantageous condition; that Jesus Christ came into the world, in the mercy of God, to produce a restoration of man; that he brought life and immortality to light by His coming; that He died on the cross for our sins, and rose again for our justification; that the Holy Ghost came by his promise, to abide with his Church, miraculously assisting the Apostles in the first institution of it: and ever since that period, interceding with the hearts of believers. These, and other truths connected with them, are not collected merely from *texts* or *sentences* of Scripture; they are parts of its records. Infinite theories may be raised upon them; but these theories, whether true or false, leave the facts where they were. There is enough in them to warm and comfort the heart; though we had assurance of nothing more²."

We cannot wonder to find the Christian verities

¹ Bampton Lectures, 1832, p. 378.

² Bampton Lectures for 1832, p. 390, 391.

very imperfectly held by those who consider it indifferent, in the estimate of the religious character, whether they are held or not.

Accordingly we have from the pen of another divine of the same party the following explanation of the manner in which our Lord is God—I shudder to transcribe his words.

“ In Christians, as in Christ Himself, there is an union of the Godhead with man ; but we must beware of supposing that in the two cases it is the same. Scripture declares that it is different ; but *does not further explain the difference, than by intimating that He was individually, we, only collectively, the Temple of God* ¹.”

No Socinian that ever lived would scruple to acknowledge, with this writer, that the Godhead dwelt in Christ in the same manner as He does in the Church—by a species of inspiration. How different is the language of the Church ! “ As the reasonable

¹ Hind’s Three Temples, p. 48. I extract from an anonymous work (the Second Travels of an Irish Gentleman), which however bears unquestionable evidence of proceeding from the same school, the following passage, which contains a somewhat similar confession of faith. I have not admitted it into the text, because being anonymous it is not strictly in point.—“ I believe in God the Creator of this world as my father. I believe his *moral character* (for in regard to his relations to man I cannot find a better expression) to be that which Jesus Christ, his *Son*, in the *sublimest sense*, has revealed to the world. I also believe in his ‘ Spirit,’ which helpeth our infirmities ; for ‘ it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure ;’ not to save us from working, but to aid us in working out our salvation with fear and tremblings,”—vol. ii. p. 206. This writer, I am bound to add, with all his speculative profaneness, shows far more of heartfelt religious feeling than is betrayed in the writings of Dr. Hampden, or some others who might be named.

soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ."

This author too (it is worth our while to observe) implies the same distinction between facts and opinions which is more distinctly avowed by Dr. Hampden, thus farther pointing out the connection of the whole together as a *doctrinal school*.

"That God has assumed a threefold *character* in his threefold dispensation, and that distinct views of the Divine nature attach to Him accordingly, is the very result of the progressive system of change, and is itself therefore *matter of historical fact*. But that there are further distinctions *unrevealed*, or *unintelligible* to us; and that the distinctions which are revealed, and understood, have reference to them, all this, of course, is not matter of historical fact; and can only be derived, *by inference*, from God's apparent design in creating a threefold impression of Himself, combined with the language of his Scriptures¹."

Lastly, we have from Dr. Hampden himself the following explicit denial (for so it must, I conceive, be called) of the doctrine of the atonement.²

"[The Scripture Revelation] has said, we have no hope in ourselves, that looking to ourselves we cannot expect happiness; and, at the same time, has fixed our attention on a Holy One who did no sin; whose perfect righteousness *it has connected* with our unrighteousness, and whose strength it has brought to the aid of our weakness. Thus Christ is emphatically said to be our Atonement; *not that we may attribute to God any change of purpose towards man by what Christ has done; but that we may know that we have passed from the*

¹ Three Temples, p. 130.

² Bampton Lectures, 1832, pp. 252, 3.

death of sin to the life of righteousness by Him, and *that our own hearts* may not condemn us."

It cannot be too strongly borne in mind that these words contain the published expression of the doctrinal views entertained by the original advocate of the proposal now submitted for the approbation of Convocation. It is indeed a yet more painful consideration that they have appeared with the imprimatur of the University of Oxford—that after having been delivered from the pulpit of St. Mary's, they have been sent forth to the world, not only without an expression of protest or dissent on the part of our authorities, but it must be said with their express sanction. I will not now go out of my way to consider this painful subject in all its bearings, but I would only observe, that by such a line of conduct the resident authorities have once for all banished from my mind the reluctance which we must naturally feel to interfere with their administration of the practical concerns of the University. Shall the Clergy of England, my Lord, stand by unmoved, leaving the government of affairs in the uncontrolled disposal of those who have already so lamentably failed in the due execution of their sacred trust? If we do, shall we not make ourselves partakers of the responsibility of whatever may follow? And if the beginning is such as we have seen, what will the end be?

To these considerations I know of but one answer, that the change in question will not tend to encourage or promulgate the doctrines displayed in the passages which I have quoted: and that among its supporters

there are some orthodox men, who conceive the cause of sound doctrine likely to be strengthened by such an alteration as is now contemplated.

Should any of us be induced to view the subject in this light, it will, I think, be well that he should remember what are the facts of the case,—First, that in the University there exists a party on whom I think I should hardly lay an unjust censure were I to apply to them the awful name of SOCINIAN. Next, that by one of the chiefs of that party—chief alike in station in the University, and in the boldness of his statements—the proposal in question was first made public, and that, in a pamphlet teeming with erroneous doctrine, and referring for further explanation to the volume of lectures from which extracts have just been given. And can it after this be needful to explain how it happens that others lend their strength to further the same plan? How many are there who like the author of the “Letter to Lord Radnor,” dismissing with a sneer all consideration of the circumstances under which the proposal is made, and the party whence it originates, judge of it by certain abstract rules, drawing their easy chair to the fire side to frame a paper constitution for the University! How many more who, ready to concede something for the sake of peace, and alarmed by the violence of Dissenters, and the threats of the House of Commons, hope by such a change to wipe away from the University the charge of bigotry, and disarm the violence of the enemy! Surely we have not so little profited by experience as not to be aware that it is to votes

like these that almost every important change owes its adoption, and when we have traced its origin to an active and eager minority we have gone as far as we need.

Besides, to apply the old test "*cui bono?*" I would ask, what party would most triumph in the success of this measure? Is there no lesson in the fact that every one who objects to the rigid maintenance of doctrine in the Church, is zealous in favour of this charge? That although the arguments alleged against the subscription of the articles at matriculation, apply with tenfold force to the oaths now required at the same time; yet it is the former, rather than the latter, against which the present assault is directed? I could point out many other circumstances which seem to me quite conclusive upon this subject; but my object will be better answered by reprinting a short paper, which has lately been put into my hands, and in which the tendency of the proposed change is strikingly illustrated, by an anonymous¹ author.

For myself, my Lord, connecting this proposal with the party whose doctrinal statement I have exhibited in these pages, I cannot but think the duty of every member of convocation to be plain. Let us be warned by the example of former times: the errors of the works before us are not new; they come to us, indeed, with the stamp of elder times—but it is the stamp of censure and condemnation, not the impress of approval. So it ever is, Satan renews, from time

¹ See Appendix.

to time, the same devices which have been often foiled. He

“ Has shot his bolts away,
Till, his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoiled,
To aim them at the shield of truth again.”

This trite remark cannot fail to recur to our minds, in reading the following extract from a work written many years ago, and descriptive of the history of one who seems to have tried the experiment of introducing liberal sentiments “ in the dark ages.”

“ Peter Abelard was born in Brittany, in the year 1079. He was doubtless a man of genius, industry, and learning. In early life, he was put under the tuition of Roscelin, an acute logician, . . . who, incorporating his philosophical subtilties with Christian ideas, departed from the simplicity of the faith, and, toward the close of the foregoing century, was condemned for tri-theism. . . .

“ After he had appeared in a very splendid light in the schools of philosophy, and had been equally distinguished by his acuteness, and by his contentious spirit, he attended the lectures of Anselm in divinity. What sort of lectures they were, we are not told; but I have not the worse opinion of them from the supercilious contempt with which Abelard spake of them. He himself had given very little attention to the sacred books, and yet very speedily decided against his teacher, pronounced him void of reason and common sense, and declared, that, with the assistance of an easy expositor, the Scriptures were perfectly intelligible to any one who had the smallest pretensions to literature. . . .

“ The same juvenile confidence, supported by the same ignorance of themselves, and the same depraved nature, has formed many Socinian and Pelagian preachers and writers

in our times, who, between the age of twenty and thirty, have despised the wisdom of antiquity, and the authority of men most justly renowned for good sense, learning, and holiness, and have committed themselves to the direction of plausible and presumptuous innovators, who are often sufficiently artful in beguiling the unwary. One of their most successful devices is, they pretend to teach young students of divinity how to think for themselves. It is remarkable, however, that we very seldom find any of those, who had gone to visit the sick lion, return from his den. . . .

“ ‘ God appeared,’ said he, ‘ in flesh, for no other end, than for our instruction, by word and example; nor did he suffer and die for any other reason, than to show and recommend his love toward us.’ . . . ‘ How is it possible that *God should be reconciled* to us by the death of His Son?’ . . . Faith he called an estimation *or opinion* of things not seen. ‘ As if,’ said Bernard, ‘ a man might think and speak, in matters of faith, what he pleases; or, as if the sacraments of our faith were not sure and certain in their nature. . . . How can any man give to so divine a principle as the faith of the Gospel, so low and mean a title as opinion?’ . . . ‘ Our *redemption* . . . consists in that *great love excited in us* by the passion of Christ, which not only frees us from the servitude of sin, but gives us the liberty of the sons of God.’ . . . ‘ The former’ (the Gospels) ‘ he thinks are designed to teach those things, which every Christian ought to know; the latter (the Epistles) to inculcate a strict attention and obedience to them.’ ‘ These last,’ says he, ‘ contain some wholesome doctrines and advice, which, *though they appertain not to the essence of belief*, may serve to embellish the Christian establishment, and to develop its tenets.’ . . . If the reader has attentively considered the arguments of Abelard, and the answer of Bernard, he has seen what weight ought to be laid on a fashionable sentiment of this day, namely, *that, in consequence of the improvements in reasoning and philosophy, a person is now capable of expounding the Scriptures much better than the an-*

cients could do. . . . Even in the darkness of the 12th century, we have seen the light as clear and full in the main, as it can be at this day. Old errors may be revived and dressed up anew, but they are the same errors still. Even the praise of original genius will be denied to the modern heretic, by him who carefully investigates antiquity¹."

Is it not remarkable to find men, in our own times, boasting, like Dr. Hampden, of the progress of our mental illumination and of our freedom from the false philosophy of former days, and comparing the discoveries of modern theology with those which have given a new existence to the science of medicine, while all the time they are only reproducing errors which were brought forward, refuted, and consigned to oblivion in the contemned middle ages²!

¹ Milner's Church History, century xii. chap. 2.

² Dr. Hampden has not even the merit of being the original modern restorer of Abelard's errors; this honour is taken from him by the celebrated Courayer, among others, who in his posthumous "Declaration," expresses himself almost in Dr. Hampden's words, as the following extracts will show: "The doctrine of the Unity of God, so true, and so evident, has served for a pretext to many, to inspire aversion to Christianity, as if it affected this truth by its doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The writings of some of the Fathers, and the wretched philosophy of the schools, may in fact, have given ground to some people to draw such a consequence, &c. Of all the modes of explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, I know of none more contrary to the true doctrine of Christianity, than that which supposes in the Deity an existence of three substances distinct, however collateral, however subordinate. It is, in my apprehension, to re-establish Polytheism, under the pretext of explaining a mystery. . . . I believe . . . that there is but only one God; that His Spirit is not a substance distinct from Him; and that Jesus Christ, to whom divinity was very intimately united, is His Son by virtue of that union. . . . We talk of hypostases, of personalities, of idioms, and of every thing that a dark philosophy could imagine, to

But it was not merely with this view, that I have referred to the history of Abelard; rather, I would ask, does not the success which attended the efforts of the Church to purge off her dross, in the 12th century, encourage us on this day, to follow the example of Saint Bernard — to meet boldly the assaults of heresy, and advocate, with increasing earnestness, the faith once delivered to the Saints, the more generally we hear it represented as a thing of small moment? And how will our conduct appear to posterity if we should take this moment as our opportunity for lessening the strength of that hedge of thorns by which our ancestors have laboured to repel the progress of error? Rather let us increase it with new barriers.

To your Grace the eyes of the Church and the University are directed, among the storms of this momentous period. We look with confidence to him whom God's providence has placed as chief watchman over us, for aid against every encroachment of the enemy. The rather because the piety of former days, which connected the education of the rich no less than of the poor, with the superintendence of the Church, has committed to your Grace the high office of Visitor, to whom the last appeal must lie in matters of this nature. In Oxford it is nothing new to find the wishes of the many quashed by the disapprobation of one or a few. Witness the obedi-

render things credible, of which it was unable to give us any notion. . . .
To avoid these excesses, we must abide in the *simplicity* of the Gospel,"
&c.—p. 14, &c.

ence so long paid to the heads of houses by the house of Convocation, and the veto, not merely theoretical, entrusted to the Vice-Chancellor and the Proctors. We are, then, wishing to introduce no new principle, when we propose an appeal to your Grace on the present subject—the rather because it seems to many among us that the heads of houses have over-estimated the degree of power shared between themselves and the House of Convocation in the step which they have lately taken. Those who differ from us in this opinion, will of course unite in regarding an appeal to the Visitor of the University as the most becoming manner in which the question can be decided. Whatever judgment your Grace may form on this subject, there can be but one feeling among us. None certainly who had the honour of joining in the proceedings of that day, when, with our elected Chancellor, the whole University pressed to do homage to your Grace, can forget the mild dignity with which we were received, or doubt that in the hour of need we shall find a visitor resolved, with gentle firmness, to maintain the rights and honour of the University.

Whatever may be the immediate issue of the present struggle, the writer will have the satisfaction of feeling that his duty has been performed. He has called the notice of the Church to the dangers which he conceives to threaten her, and he doubts not that in this hour of need more able champions will be raised up for her defence. Thus far it is our duty to follow the stoical rule of heathen philosophy, that we must maintain and defend the truth for its own sake,

and because it is the truth, without regard to the result ; but, as Christians, our hopes go far beyond this, in the confidence, that come what may, the final victory of the Church is certain ; her real strength is in the defence of HIM who, though He needs not our services, yet is pleased to employ them as means to the fulfilment of his own purposes ; and His promise it is which assures us “ that sooner or later ours must be the winning side, and that the victory will be complete, universal, eternal.”

I have the honour to remain,

MY LORD,

Your Grace's most obedient

Humble Servant,

A CLERICAL MEMBER OF CONVOCATION.

A P P E N D I X.

The following is a Reprint of the Paper referred to in page 35.

1. Is the proposed substitution of a "Declaration" for "Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles," intended to relax our present system or no? If not, what adequate good do its authors propose, to set against the evil of unsettling men's minds? If it is, are these the times for weakening the authority of the Church, or requiring less definite and distinct views of Scripture truth?

2. If no relaxation had been intended, would not the principle of substituting a 'Declaration' for Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles have been applied to the several Degrees conferred by the University as well as to the Matriculation?

3. Is it not notorious that the same proposal, when originally made last Term, was looked upon at once by all persons out of the University (of whatever bias) as a relaxation of our practice? and will not this persuasion produce that laxity?

4. Is it not a coincidence worthy of remark, that those persons, whose principles lead them to desire greater laxity, are unanimously in favour of substituting a Declaration for Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles; and ought not this to be a warning to us who wish to see religious instruction given definitely and fully according to the doctrines of our Church?

5. Does not the proposed substitution, under colour of being "*equivalent* as a Test to the present act of Subscription, *i. e. neither more nor less exclusive*¹," really introduce a radical change by the words "so far as my knowledge extends?"

6. Since the alleged ground for this change is the supposed religious ignorance of young men, or their imagined incapacity to understand the Articles, do not these words "so far as my *knowledge* extends," on the very supposition of its authors, nullify the whole Declaration?

7. May not a profession of "assent, so far as my knowledge extends," be made by any person who is carelessly or wilfully ignorant of every statement in the Articles? Will it not encourage that wilfulness and carelessness, and become a standing jest among all the less thoughtful of the young men who are to make it?

8. Is not such a declaration analogous to the mode of signing the Articles, "*as far as* (quatenus) they are agreeable with holy Scripture," adopted in Germany? and did the circumstance, that that formula was introduced by very pious and excellent men, who only wished to relieve tender consciences, prevent its being grievously abused, and becoming the skreen and the occasion of intolerable laxity?

9. Since the effect of that formula has been, that very many even right-minded men in Germany, now think it presumptuous to declare that they assent to any Articles, "*because* (quia) they agree with holy Scripture," why should not this formula have the like effect even upon right-minded young men here, and promote a sceptical frame of mind, which will doubt the possibility of ever "coming to the knowledge of the truth?"

10. Will not the promise to "conform to the Liturgy and *Discipline* of the Church of England" be broken, whenever an individual wilfully fails to attend the daily College Service,

¹ Letter to Lord Radnor, p. 22.

or habitually turns away from the Lord's Supper? and is not the exaction of such a promise a snare to men's consciences, and contrary to the spirit of the Church of England, as well as calculated to "bring a very solemn act into light esteem"?

11. Have not such sorts of promises the tendency to present those things to the mind as *mere* duties, which are our highest and inestimable *privileges*?

12. Does not the distinction between "*assent* to the Doctrines of the Church" and "*conformity* to her Discipline," imply that *outward* conformity alone is required, encourage the notion that Discipline is mere matter of opinion, and so tend to weaken the authority of those Articles, which relate to Discipline, and which are already comparatively disparaged?

13. Is not the very form of the Declaration, "*I do assent*," "*I will conform*," "*I am ready and willing*," calculated to exalt persons' notions of self, making them look upon their assent and conformity as an act of compliance rather than a duty? as a thing which it is at their own discretion to do or not to do, rather than an act of obedience?

14. Is not an *act* of obedience much better than *professions*?

15. Have we not, again and again, had testimony even from those who lived at a time, when the Articles were less studied than they now are, that the signing them had a beneficial effect upon themselves? and does not one who understands human nature well, (Lord Brougham) object to that signature, on the ground of the influence which that act has on men in after-life?

16. Has not the knowledge of Christian truth been increasing among us in proportion as the minds of our youth have been directed to the Articles? and is it not wanton trifling with our privileges, to exchange for an untried course, that under which God has blessed us for 250 years, and, as we trust, is

¹ The objection made to the present signature of the Articles in the "Letter to Lord Radnor," p. 18.

day by day more and more blessing us, in order to pacify, or to facilitate our controversy with those who love neither our Articles nor our Instruction?

17. If persons now occasionally come up to the University, who on account of their ignorance of *all* Christian truth, are unfit to sign the Articles, is this evil to be remedied by requiring *less* of them, or by requiring *more* of their instructors? Has not the University already raised the character of religious instruction in the country, and may it not, by a steady adherence to its principles, raise it still further?

18. Has not this agitation of the question among ourselves, the tendency to throw stumbling-blocks in the way of our younger Members, to create or exaggerate difficulties, and to lead them to sign with doubt and misgiving?

19. Since Subscription to Articles of Faith must of necessity involve different degrees of assent, according to persons' different degrees of religious attainments, knowledge, and character, have not these discussions the tendency to produce perplexity as to all Subscription, even that of the Clergy?

20. Has not this protecting clause, "so far as my knowledge extends," a direct tendency to foster the evil maxim of the day, that "one cannot believe that which one does not fully understand," and so to make belief a mere matter of knowledge?

21. Has the University any guarantee, that if it consent to this alteration, other measures will not be founded upon it? or rather, is it not probable that, sooner or later, further alterations will be so engrafted, which the right-minded among the advocates of the present change will endeavour in vain to oppose?

22. Did any alteration, which had for its object the relaxation of settled principles, ever fail of producing further relaxation? or did the authors of the first change ever foresee the extent of the evils which they caused?

23. Would it, *e. g.* (to take only the first step in the career)

be even an extension of the proposed principle, to dispense with Subscription at the Degree of B.A., in the case of the great majority of our Members, all such, namely, as should not intend to be teachers¹; and would not this palpably and seriously affect the religious instruction of the place?

24. Have not some of the Advocates of the present measure already avowed themselves favourable to further innovation? Has not one, who speaks as in a station of authority, proposed² to substitute a "profession of belief in the Articles of faith contained in the Apostles' Creed and Church Catechism," as a "*less rigorous test*," or again, a mere "Declaration of conformity to the Discipline and worship of the Church, and of willingness to be instructed in her Articles of Faith?"

25. Has not the first advocate of this measure "avowed"³ himself favourable to the removal of *all tests*, as far as they are employed as securities of Orthodoxy among our members at large"—expressed the wish⁴ that "there were less of Dogmatism in our Articles"—implied⁵ "that they are unsuited to the *present state of Theological opinion*, and might be improved in accordance with the advances made in other scientific methods"—asserted⁶, that "a great deal of the false philosophy of former times is involved in the expressions of our formularies"—objected⁷ to "Articles of religious communion, [and therein to Creeds] as assuming an immoveable character, fatally adverse to all theological improvement"—and condemned⁸ the "adherence to them, as no less incongruous and injurious to Religion, than in a Society of Physicians, to make the maxims

¹ This is made the ground of distinction between Undergraduate Subscription and that at the Degree of B.A. (or at least is the only one mentioned) in the "Letter to Lord Radnor," p. 17, and by Dr. Hampden "on the use of Religious Tests in the University," p. 36.

² Letter to Lord Radnor, p. 22, note.

³ Dr. Hampden, p. 35. 2nd Edit.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 14.

⁵ *Ib.* p. 42.

⁶ *Ib.* p. 24.

⁷ *Ib.* p. 22.

⁸ *Ib.* p. 22.

of Hippocrates or Galen the unalterable basis of their profession?"

26. Have we no ground for "dreading some attempt against the great doctrines of Christianity¹," when the first proposer of this change, himself a Christian², puts the "Unitarian on the same footing precisely of earnest religious zeal and love for the Lord Jesus Christ, as any other Christian?"

27. Is it befitting the University, as the guardian of religious education, to frame her regulations with reference to temporary political excitement, or the state of political parties—to lean on man and not on God?

A BACHELOR OF DIVINITY.

¹ Letter, p. 1.

² Dr. Hampden, p. 20.

The proposed Declaration is as follows :—

"I declare, that I do as far as my knowledge extends, assent to the Doctrines of the United Church of England and Ireland, as set forth in her thirty-nine Articles; that I will conform to her liturgy and discipline; and that I am ready and willing to be instructed in her Articles of religion, as required by the statutes of this University."

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